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Lawn&Garden Marketing™

AUGUST 1988

An Intertec publication

Cover story: NHS—a passport to success

Outdoor lighting • Non-plant pesticides

SPECIAL SECTION
Lawn and Garden Distributors
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The merchandising magazine for lawn, garden and leisure living products.

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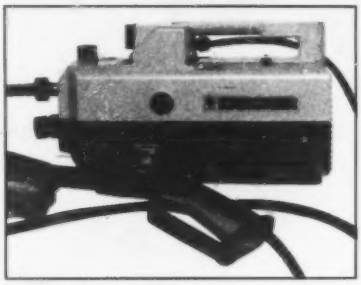

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Did you know?

Retail sales of walk-behind mowers are divided among seven classes of retailers: national retailers, 29%; hardware stores, 17%; discount stores, 14%; lawn and garden centers, 12%; home centers, 7%; OPE dealers, 3%; and farm supply, 2%.

Source: OPEI/1987-88 *Outdoor Power Equipment Retail Sales Report.*

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From the Editor

Farmers lament it as the 1988 drought; weather forecasters call it a heat wave; and scientists speculate that it's a global warming trend, evidence of their long-prophesied "greenhouse effect."

No matter what the term, this year's lack of rainfall, coupled with higher-than-average temperatures, has affected everything from the way our products are shipped, to the way we prepare our food, to the way we demonstrate patriotism, to the way we care for our lawns and gardens.

Particularly throughout the Midwest and Southern regions of the country, lack of rainfall this year generated edicts by various municipalities limiting—even forbidding—the watering of lawns and gardens and the use of charcoal grills for food preparation. Some cities even banned fireworks displays during our country's Fourth of July celebrations.

Charlie Dunn of the Garden Center Institute, which provides marketing services to the industry, succinctly described the drought's affect on one region: "The Southeast is dead." In his own city of Atlanta, rainfall during the first six months already was off by more than 50 percent. And, on a June trip to northeast Kansas, he found that many discounters already had closed out their seasonal lawn and garden departments, and at other year-round garden center operations, plants were stressed severely.

Power equipment retailers have been equally burned by the drought as consumers seem to have put off purchases of equipment. The drought, as a matter of fact, was one of the main topics for discussion at a gathering of power equipment manufacturers at an annual conference in June. Manufacturers seemed to agree that retailers in this industry have the staying power needed to sustain the effects of a down year. Said John Munn, president of Wheel Horse Products, "Watering bans have hurt (sales)....and retailers are hurt, but they don't think the world is coming to an end." And Jairo Estrada, president of Garden Way Inc., predicted that, because of the maturity of this industry, "We can weather these changes better than many other industries."

Although it is true that the drought has translated into lost profits for many retailers—landscaping services are off, as are sales of fertilizer products, power equipment and repair services—there is a silver lining to this cloud. On a positive note, the drought suggests that sales of certain pesticides may be receiving a boost due to the kinds of warm-weather pests that thrive during dry conditions.

And industry experts speculate that with rain later in the year, the fall selling season will rebound with homeowners' interests revigorated and with their desires to replace effected plant material.

In our annual Market Data Issue in November/December, we will cover the topic more thoroughly, assessing the damage regionally and detailing how it has affected sales by category in 1988 and how it may affect sales in 1989. In the meantime, please take a few moments to tell us your story. See "The 1988 Drought," page 21.

Susan L. Anderson

Lawn&Garden Marketing

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Study reveals importance of distributors

How pervasive is the two-step method of distribution in lawn and garden? One in four independents buys nearly 100 percent of his hardlines and package goods through a distributor. In all, 64 percent of the independents purchase more than 50 percent of the same through two-step. And nearly one in three is supplied by at least six distributors! (Only 1 percent has only one supplier.)

Members of the National Lawn and Garden Distributors Assn. wanted more detailed information like this about the independent retailer. So, in 1986, the NLGDA, together with *Lawn & Garden Marketing* magazine, undertook one of the most ambitious research projects to date. A sampling of nearly 400 independent lawn and garden retailers across the country was asked comprehensive questions pertaining to store size, sales volume, product mix, competition and opinions of supplier services. The result—the "Market Analysis on the Garden Center Industry," —is a compila-

THIS PRETTY MUCH DESCRIBES CONVENTIONAL PESTICIDE SALES.

©1987, Safer, Inc. All rights reserved.

tion of information about the independent lawn and garden retailer never before collected in one complete package.

An overview

According to the survey, training by suppliers—both manufacturers and distributors—ranks high with retailers when stacked up against other benefits and services that the suppliers offer. Only distributor catalogs are rated as more valuable.

Distributor trade shows are ranked as "very important" to a majority of the retailers. More than two-thirds of the respondents said they attend them, and new products seem to be the key motivating factor. Early order discounts, along with dating programs, are very motivating distributor show incentives as well. But only one in 20 say grand prizes are very motivating.

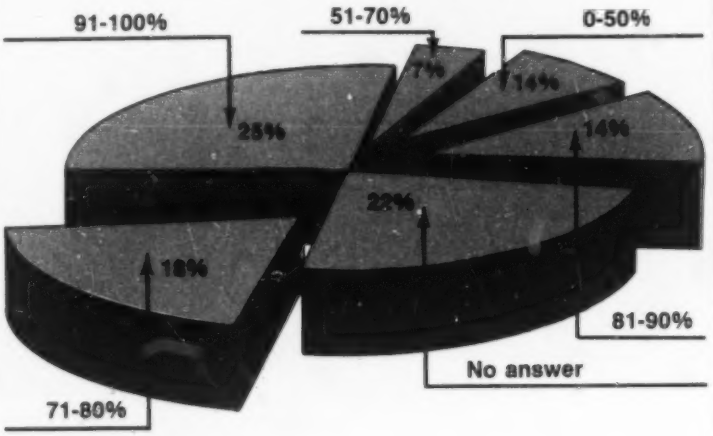
Retailers had a chance to rank distributor qualities as well. The study revealed that in choosing a distributor, dependability, delivery service, overall service, fill ratio and price were the top five factors.

In part, the "Market Analysis on the Garden Center Industry " pinpoints what retailers view as the most valuable services the lawn and garden distributor offers; at the same time, it pinpoints what they view as the least valuable.

Distributors and manufacturers alike have used the results of this survey—like many of these mentioned here— to gain a better understanding of the needs of the independent retailer in an effort

continued on page D-52...

Percentage of hardlines and package goods bought through distributor



Source: *LGM*/NLGDA 1986 survey

THIS PRETTY MUCH EXPLAINS WHY.

Conventional, petrochemical-based pesticides aren't exactly setting sales records these days. Increased consumer sensitivity to their risks and more stringent EPA standards, including the banning of some products, are all taking their toll.

On the other hand, consider the reception Safer *non-toxic* pesticides are receiving. In the last year alone, fueled by heightened consumer awareness and on-going national advertising support, our sales have more than doubled (see chart).

Make sure you devote plenty of shelf space to the Safer expanded line. Otherwise, you might find yourself flat out.

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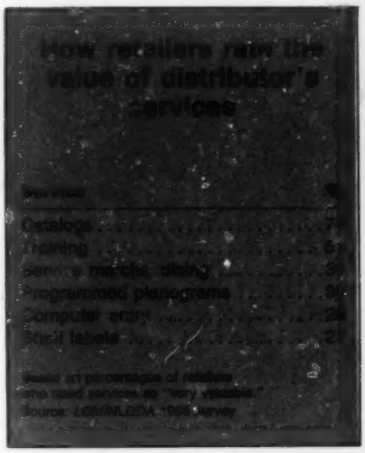
Circle (75) on Reply Card

Study...continued

to more closely match their services to those needs.

Complete copies of the study, including the profile information, is available for purchase by contacting Bill Robinson, executive director NLGDA, 1900 Arch St., Philadelphia, PA 19103; (215) 564-3484. **—LGM**



Why retailers use one distributor over another

Criteria	%
Dependability	95
Delivery service	92
Service	87
Fill ratio	80
Price	79
Early orders	69
Terms	68
Wats line	65
Sales representative	59
Ad programs	49
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Distributor shows	31

Source: LGM/NLGDA 1988 survey

Editor's Note:

All editorial in the August 1988 Special Section "Distributors—Meeting retailers' needs across the country" was written by Jane Forman Cigard. Cover illustration by Linda Pokorny.

There is still one really DRY dehy: PURE-TEX 800/542-0106

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Replacement buyers are paying more

An Outdoor Power Equipment Institute continuing national research program that is used to track the retail market for key lawn and garden products has found that experienced buyers (those who are replacing a product) clearly are buying different products than first-time buyers.

For every product surveyed, the replacement buyer has paid a higher median price. This indicates an upgrade in product and features as compared with the first-time buyer.

OPEI also has researched the median incomes of various product buyers. The highest median income—$49,741—is found among garden-tractor purchasers; they are followed by the snowblower buyers, with a median income of $43,726. Walk-behind lawnmower buyers' median is $37,556. Such a wide range of income indicates different advertising strategy and product appeal.

This OPEI research program involves contacting 5,285 randomly selected U.S. households each week by telephone. The program began on September 1, 1987, and, over a twelve-month period, 275,000 households will have been contacted to see if they have purchased a particular product during the past 3, 6 or 12 months. Those having bought a product then are asked a series of questions regarding the product, the purchaser and the retail outlet.

First-time vs. replacement buyers

Product	Median price first-time	Median price replacement
Lawnmower	$193	$232
Riding mower	1,072	1,205
Lawn tractor	1,118	1,354
Garden tractor	1,852	2,799
Snowthrower	331	432
Tiller	392	499

Source: 1987-88 OPEI national research program on retail sales

Briefs

• The Honda Engine Dept. of **American Honda Motor Co. Inc.,** Los Angeles, has announced the expansion of its Honda engine distributor network to include Lightbourn Equipment Co., Pasadena, Texas. Lightbourn will supply Honda Engines to Texan dealers in San Antonio, Dallas, Houston and the surrounding areas.

• **Kubota Tractor Corp.**, Los Angeles, has announced the promotion of Bud Hopkins to national parts manager; Dan Ferris will be director of distribution, purchasing and assembly; Syd Wyncoop is in the newly established position of assistant director of financial services.

• **Sachs-Dolmar Div.**, Shreveport, La., has increased the warranty on its two-stroke lawnmowers. These mowers now have a two-year warranty on the engines and a one-year warranty on the deck when purchased for consumer use. For commercial use, a one-year warranty on both the engines and the deck is offered. The company also has introduced a new six-page full-line catalog and a POP and promotional giveaway catalog targeted for Sachs-Dolmar distributors/dealers.

• Robert A. Leffel is the new director of sales and service, engine division, at **Kohler Co.**, Kohler, Wis.; David J. Ekvall is the new manager, national accounts.

• Paul Schleiff has been appointed district sales manager for **Sten's Lawnmower Parts Inc.**, Jasper, Ind. He will be working in Arkansas, west Tennessee, north Mississippi and north Louisiana.

• Randy T. Marra has joined the staff of **Dixon Industries Inc.**, Coffeyville, Kan., as territory manager for New York. He will work out of Rochester, N.Y., and serve as the direct factory contact for dealers throughout the state who sell and service the company's ZTR[R] riding lawnmowers.

M&W Gear Co. acquires Willsey-D Corp. assets

M&W Gear Co., Gibson City, Ill., has acquired all of the assets of the Willsey-D Corp., the manufacturer of the Grazer lawn and commercial grounds-mowing equipment line

The Grazer line, which includes riding mowers and accessories, will continue to be manufactured at the Maple Hill, Kan., plant by the former Willsey-D personnel.

Allegretti & Co. names new vice president of sales

James B. Farland has been named vice president of sales for Allegretti & Co., Chatsworth, Calif.

Farland has been involved in the lawn and garden industry for years. He was previously vice president of sales and marketing for Anchor Swan Corp., the garden hose manufacturer out of Worthington, Ohio.

Walbro Corp. enters small-engine ignition market

Walbro Corp., Cass City, Mich., has signed an agreement with AB Svenska Elektromagneter (SEM), Amal, Sweden, to form a joint-venture company that will manufacture and market ignition systems, flywheels and related components for customers in the small-engine industry worldwide, with the exception of Europe.

The joint-venture company will be known as SEM-Walbro Corp. Walbro will own 51 percent of the joint venture, with SEM holding a 49 percent interest. Headquarters for SEM-Walbro will be in Cass City.

In other news at the company, John H. "Jack" Frazer has been named director of human resources. He also is a member of the Industrial Relations Research Assn.

Cross-selling to non-plant pesticide users

Gardeners are non-plant pesticide users too. And with the myriad of products being offered in this category, lawn and garden retailers are in the best position to offer expert advice to consumers and capitalize on cross-sell opportunities.

By Adele I. Rogers, *editorial contributor*

This certainly is not the first article written for independent or specialty retailers on merchandising and cross-sell opportunities, nor is it likely to be the last. The observation among many manufacturers serving the lawn and garden industry is that much more growth potential exists for retailers who specialize in their trade.

While mass-merchant, supermarket and similar distribution outlets continue to become more important to consumers—as convenient, one-stop vehicles for multiple category shopping—the specialized retailer offers consumers benefits that its superstore competitors cannot.

However, statistics show that within this industry, lawn and garden retail experts have not kept up the momentum in capitalizing on the strengths that originally made them successful. In some cases, the attitude is that personal service, technical knowledge, wide selection and overall satisfaction is little substitute for low prices and one-stop shopping convenience. In some product categories, this may hold true, but the lawn and garden products consumer is better educated, more affluent and more aware than the average consumer in general.

Two product categories that lend themselves well to cross-selling with plant and garden care products are household/outdoor non-plant insecticides, rodenticides and pet-care products. While not all household pesticide users are gardeners, it is likely that the opposite is true: many garden pesticide consumers are users of non-plant pesticides. There has been a downward trend in the importance these products play within the independent channels.

The 1987 Kline Survey on "Consumer Markets for Pesticides and Fertilizers" breaks out the subject categories that sell by key outlet types (see Table 1, p. 40).

In the household insecticide category, supermarkets account for 50 percent of consumer purchases; mass-merchants account for 33 percent. Do the small percentages for lawn and garden centers and others listed in Table 1 spell gloom or opportunity for such outlets? For creative and aggressive retailers, these percentages spell opportunity.

Five reasons to sell non-plant pesticides

1. L&G retailers already know pesticides as a whole.
2. Manufacturers say they rely on retailers to be able to stock and promote the brands.
3. Retailers can be competitive and offer service, too.
4. Retailers more easily can educate consumers about the products.
5. Many of these products are cross-seasonal.

The specialty retailer is the expert

The pesticide category, in general, is more complex than ever (see "Pesticides: Keeping up with the choices," April/May 1988 *Lawn and Garden Marketing*). The lawn and garden expert is the principal source of information on pesticides: for updating information on chemical hazards, new formulas, current packaging and delivery systems; for using the right product for the right application; for defining the pros and cons of natural vs. petrochemical ingredients and the like.

Both manufacturers of garden pesticides and non-plant related pesticide products rely on retailer experts to stock and promote their brands. These manufacturers truly believe the dealer can reap significant volume and profit gains by doing what they do best: servicing and educating.

Largely advertised brands, such as Raid, Black Flag and Hartz Mountain, are prime supermarket and mass-merchant lines that dominate their respective categories. But what about other high quality, innovative and well-respected brands? Especially those that have their roots in lawn and garden chemicals or those that recognize that it is the lawn and garden or similar retailer who is most capable of promoting the manufacturers' lines?

Reaching out to the consumer

Of the more than five dozen insecticide/rodenticide products from Chevron's Ortho division, San Francisco, more than 40 percent are non-plant related. In fact, says marketing manager John Brex, "The 1989 Ortho ad campaign's theme will be 'This is Home,' whereby Ortho will be positioned as the most-trusted, high-quality line of products for all pesticide needs—garden-related or not." Nearly $1 million will be spent, mostly in television, promoting this concept. Plus, retailers will have an opportunity to participate in a special merchandising incentive campaign that revolves around total "home pest control."

Security Products, Atlanta, a subsidi-

continued...

Cross-selling...*continued*

ary of S. C. Johnson & Son (makers of the Raid brand), also positions its line as a broad-spectrum one. The company concentrates its distribution within the lawn and garden, hardware and home center channels.

Louie Seabolt, president, predicts a trend. "I think there will be more cross-selling evident among certain trade classes. And I foresee more and more garden centers selling household and other categories of pesticides."

A large share of the Spectrum Group's, Jacksonville, Fla., six brand lines can be found in lawn and garden outlets. Hot Shot, Rid-a-Bug and Rid-a-Flea are exclusively household or pet-related brands. Gene Wagnon, director of marketing for Spectrum, believes these lines, along with the company's three lawn and garden lines, offer the independent retailer the ability to carry a wide selection of items at competitive prices, while at the same time allowing him to provide good customer service.

Getting into the pet-care market

The distribution nitch for Enforcer Products, Cartersville, Ga., a line of non-plant related pesticides, is the traditional, specialized retailer. Says vice president sales and marketing, Jim Biggs, "We prefer channels of distribution that can educate the consumer on the benefits of our products. This is going to be particularly important with our new 'break-the-flea-and-tick-cycle' product kit, which represents an organized treatment for all the problem areas: the pet, the home and the yard."

Safer Inc., Wellesley, Mass., from the onset offered lawn and garden dealers pet-care products as cross-sell opportunities within its all-natural category of garden pesticides. To be added to its five-item pet care line for 1989 is Safer Flea & Tick Spray, a proprietary formula of fatty acids and pyrethrin that not only removes the irritant piperonyl butoxide but increases efficacy as well through the synergistic effect of the two actives.

Warren Lerfald, vice president of sales for Black Leaf Products, Des Plaines, Ill., says, "If nothing else, the lawn and garden dealer can subsidize his otherwise seasonal business with counter-seasonal items. That's why Black Leaf's wide line of garden chemicals is complemented by many non-plant ones." Bonide Chemical, Yorkville, N.Y., falls into the same category. Says Jim Wurz, "the mass-merchant is not going to lead the success of pesticides. That's in the hands of the independent."

The d-Con Co., Montvale, N.J., one of the household pesticide manufacturers, with more than $100 million in sales primarily through grocery stores and mass-merchants, recognizes the important role the lawn and garden independent plays in pesticide merchandising. Group product manager Tom Murphy says, "We have implemented a formal campaign for this class of trade that we know will be mutually beneficial. We are aware that many products can only do well through consumer education. And massive advertising and promotion will continue to increase d-Con awareness."

In Easton, Pa., Coulston International's acting director, Lawrence Feller, prefers to "sell the steak, not the sizzle," because his company's retail products, under the Perma-Kill name, are spin-offs of sophisticated formulas developed for government, agriculture and other industries.

Letting the consumer know

Other lines whose success involves a fair amount of consumer education include:

- Stick-em from J.T. Eaton & Co., Twinsburg, Ohio, the experts in non-poisonous, no-snap rodent traps and other bait products;
- Shoo-fly, an innovative line of hornet, wasp and flying insect killers packaged in precision delivery systems from Lynwood Labs Inc., Needham, Mass., and sold exclusively through hardware and garden distributors;
- Nu-Way Products, Chicago, makers of the first and only dry-mist flea and tick killer and marketers of specially-formulated household pesticides under the Pow! label;
- PIC Inc., Orange, N.J., which offers a quality household line at a lower price and caters to the independent; and
- the Aeroxon/Revenge line from Roxide, New Rochelle, N.Y., a collection of pest controls for home use.

Two hot new product brands to watch are the Bengal line and Whitmire's UltraGuard. Both Bengal Chemical Inc., Baton Rouge, La., and Whitmire Research Labs Inc., St. Louis, boast proprietary and revolutionary technology throughout their lines.

Bengal came to the market three years ago with the only roach spray that guaranteed roach extermination overnight. This was followed by an indoor dri-fogger and a wasp and hornet killer,"...the first products of their kind that are non-flammable, provide instant knock-down, are safe to use, are odorless and deliver amazing results!" exclaims an enthusiastic Bob LeBlanc, company president. "The pest control results speak for themselves, and our growth to $20 million in three years is evidence of customer satisfaction." LeBlanc gives credit to the retailing experts who took the time to educate and merchandise the line's features and benefits.

After many years as the pest-control technology leaders in many professional industries, Whitmire has announced its line of UltraGuard retail products. The company is at present only test marketing the line, however. If the test is successful, Whitmire will launch the products nationally. Marketed under brands such as X-clude and Knox-out in the greenhouse and PCO industries UltraGuard will consist of both home and garden products. Sales and marketing manager, Jeff Martin, says, "Our uniqueness comes in tech-

continued on page 63...

Table 1

Retail outlet	Household insecticides	Outdoor non-plant insecticides	Pest insecticides
Lawn & garden centers	8%	18%	1%
Hardware stores	8	8	2
Home improvement	1	3	-
Farm supply stores	1	4	-
All others	82	72	97
Total manufacturers $	$440mm	$60mm	$250mm

Feedback

Compiled by Gina Kellogg Hogan, *associate editor*

Patio products are a profitable line to carry—if you are devoted to them, have the space for them and carry enough inventory, according to the respondents of the April/May 1988 *Lawn & Garden Marketing* questionnaire.

Experience may be a key to success in selling patio furniture lines; most of the respondents carrying have been in the business for 10 years. In fact, 50 percent have sold for 10 years or more.

Most of the respondents—43.7 percent—said that they became profitable in selling the lines during the first year. The second year was mentioned by 31.3 percent; 12.5 percent said they became profitable in the third year.

One of the main reasons that could induce a retailer to become interested in selling patio furniture is the average sale per customer. Ralph Gaudio, The "G" Boys Inc., Marlton, N.J., said that the average sale of patio furniture in his store is about $300. M.J. Moseng of the Bruce Co., Middleton, Wis., said his company's average sale of patio furniture is $750.

The typical markup on the lines, according to respondents, ranged between 30 and 40 percent. Snipes Farm & Nursery, Morrisville, Pa., has a typical markup of 40 percent or more, according to Hannah Hogan. She said that her business carries leisure furniture because of the good profits, and because it is a great way to diversify.

However, those who argue against selling patio furniture complain that the lines take up too much space—both on the showroom floor and in storage. Charles Wallace of Wallace & Son, Thomson, Ga., says space certainly is one of the reasons why his company does not carry, nor do they plan to carry, patio furniture. The lines simply take up too much space that could be devoted to other items.

However, for those retailers who do carry leisure furniture, the amounts of space devoted to the furniture varies. For instance, at Snipes Farm & Nursery, Hogan says her store devotes 2,500 sq. ft. to leisure furniture in-season, while at The Bruce Co., Moseng says his store devotes 7,500 sq. ft. to the lines in-season.

Because patio furniture is so seasonal, nearly all of the respondents—93.8 percent—discount the lines a great deal at the season's end. The median amount by which the respondents said they discount is 28.8 percent. Twenty-five percent of the respondents discount 15-24 percent; another 25 percent discount 25-34 percent.

Where do retailers go to see the lines and make their selections? Most of the respondents to *LGM's* questionnaire said they opt for the National Hardware Show—31.3 percent. Others attend the Casual Furniture Show in Chicago, 25 percent; the ACE Hardware Show, 18.8 percent; the National Home Center Show, Chicago, 12.5 percent; and the International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo in Louisville, Ky., 6.3 percent. Just under 13 percent said that they do not attend any shows.

Most retailers responding to the questionnaire seemed eager to let others know of the financial success these products offer. Overall, they seem to be saying, "Get into it, be devoted, carry the top lines and sell!"

• Choose your furniture lines carefully. Try to get exclusive lines just for your store. With space at a premium, keep your lines condensed and back up stock on your final choices so you will have stock when the customer makes their choice—*Ralph A. Gaudio, The "G" Boys Inc., Marlton, N.J.*

• Competition from mass-merchants is becoming tougher. Low-end products are less distinguishable from high-end merchandise. Consumer education is essential—*Hannah Hogan, Snipes Farm & Nursery, Morrisville, Pa.*

• Offer quality. Don't try to compete with discounter's promotional quality—*George Hara, George & Cliff's Hardware, St. Petersburg, Fla.*

• If you get into the business, get into it. Carry a full selection, from promotional web chairs to upscale sets. It works much better—*Joel Putnam, Hurst Stores, Ben Franklin/Ace Hardware, St. George, Utah*

• Always go with better-quality goods—step-up goods—*Jim Bills, Gibsons, Wichita Falls, Texas*

• It's a way to expand. I can see us carrying them in years to come. There are quite a few large homes with swimming pools around here—*Cindy Smith, Ins-N-Outs, St. Francisville, La.*

• Discount stores don't have the quality (products), so we could offer customers better quality. We've done this with lawn equipment; we carry top-of-the-line—*Eric Rotts, Eric's Lawn Equipment, Metairie, La.* **—LGM**

Patio furniture lines

Percentage of types of patio furniture lines that are sold through lawn and garden outlets:

Type of patio furniture	Percentage	Type of patio furniture	Percentage
Wooden furniture	81.3%	Woven vinyl lounge chairs	62.5%
Umbrellas	75		
Fabric-covered lounge chairs	68.8	Resin	18.8
		Rattan/wicker	12.5
Complete fabric-covered table/chair sets	62.5	Wrought iron	12.5
		Misc.	18.8

Source: *Lawn & Garden Marketing* April/May 1988 questionnaire.

Images Fiberglass Products

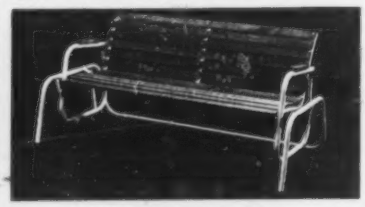
Outdoor fiberglass tables will be displayed, along with PVC resin chairs, stacking tables, lazy susans, table servers, furniture cleaner, tempered-glass tables, umbrellas and cushions.

Circle (215) on Reply Card

General Aluminum Products Inc.

Exhibited will be the company's gazebo. Features include a heavy-duty aluminum frame and a weather-resistant fabric roof.

Circle (216) on Reply Card



Flanders Ind. Inc.

Royal Park outdoor furniture will be exhibited. Features include 1 1/4-in. steel frames, high-gloss, polyester powder coating and lumber that is milled, molded, drilled and finished.

Circle (217) on Reply Card

Grosfillex

Displayed will be a complete line of resin leisure furniture, featuring stacking monoblock and adjustable high-back folding armchairs with matching tables.

Circle (218) on Reply Card

Cross-selling...*continued*

nology that provides consumers with the best of the best—that is, 100 percent efficacy, safety, convenience of use, less toxicity and instant-with-lasting results, all rolled into one. No other products can make that claim.

"Microencapsulation, high-tech delivery systems and special formulations are factors that contribute to the product benefits that today's consumer is looking for," Martin adds. For example, UltraGuard Wasp Stopper not only knocks down wasps instantly but forms a protective barrier against subsequent attackers who are otherwise lured to the site.

Whitmire will concentrate its distribution in lawn and garden and hardware networks, because these types of retailers are knowledgeable experts who can inform consumers of today's newest pest control technology.

Retailers should take a chance

As Mal Hollander, vice president of sales for Burlington Biomedical Corp., Farmingdale, N.Y., puts it, "Rather than resist them, independents will do well to lead them." Hollander is talking about new products, new technologies, spin-off categories and any products that sell best when backed by information and service. His company, which manufactures a line of ecologically safe animal repellents called RO-PEL, directs its distribution through retailers who are service oriented.

Retailers need to be on the lookout for products or brands that offer them a competitive nitch. They should be aware of products that can broaden category selection for the consumer who shops there for traditional supplies. And they should look for products that lend themselves more favorably to being sold with the kind of effort only an expert can provide.

Manufacturers are not the only group who profit from multiple positioning. Dealers who exploit their value-added services and offer products that do best when backed by these services will profit too. —LGM

Adele Rogers has spent the last nine years of her 20-year marketing, sales and general management career in the lawn and garden industry, beginning with W.R. Grace as marketing manager for Peters Plant Foods and Terra-lite soil amendments. She then joined Safer Inc. and eventually became vice president of U.S. operations. Rogers is currently operating a marketing and management services firm, which concentrates on assisting primarily lawn and garden companies to identify product and promotional opportunities, as well as providing hands-on project execution. For more information, you may contact her at (703) 382-5888.

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